

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the August 9, 2022 Special Meeting

Call to Order

Bob Yamartino called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Bob Yamartino, Jim Irish and Carol Bufithis were present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Carol Bufithis made a motion, seconded by Jim Irish, to approve the agenda, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes of Regular Board of Selectmen Meetings

a. June 6, 2022 - Regular Board of Selectmen Meeting

Carol Bufithis made a motion, seconded by Jim Irish, to approve the minutes of the regular Board of Selectmen meeting of June 6, 2022, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution for the DEMHS (Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security) Region II - Security Grant Program for FY21

Jim Irish made a motion, seconded by Carol Bufithis, to resolve that the Town of Middlefield Board of Selectmen may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, any and all documents which it deems to be necessary and appropriate; and further resolved that Robert C. Yamartino, as First Selectman of the Town of Middlefield, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Town of Middlefield and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or

appropriate to carry out the term of such documents, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents.

Jim Irish explained that this had been requested at the River COG meeting and it was a good thing to have in place. Bob Yamartino felt that the documents were probably never signed by Ed Bailey last year.

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution to Approve the 2022 STEAP Grant

Jim Irish made a motion, seconded by Carol Bufithis, to resolve that First Selectman Robert C. Yamartino be, and hereby is, authorized to accept on behalf of the Town of Middlefield, a 2022 Connecticut STEAP Grant in the amount up to \$500,000.00 for Wastewater In fracture Improvements. Further resolved that that First Selection Robert C. Yamartino is hereby authorized to enter into and execute any and all agreements, contracts and documents necessary to obtain said 2022 STEAP Grant with the State of Connecticut.

Bob Yamartino explained that the application for the STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) grant needs to be completed by Monday and part of that is for the town to put 20 percent (up to \$125,000) toward the grant. They recently found out that the town is not permitted to utilize any money from federal or state grants, so money needs to be provided from other sources. The WPCA board will approve the allocation of up to \$100,000 out of the fund balance to provide that funding.

Mr. Yamartino noted that the town owns the Brookside pump station and has already allocated \$225,000 towards that expenditure. The town will reimburse the WPCA from the fund balance. Jim Irish asked if the WPCA transfer will require a town meeting and Mr. Yamartino confirmed that it will. Carol Bufithis asked why it would require a town meeting to transfer funds and Mr. Yamartino explained that any time money is moved into or out of funds in excess of .5 percent of the operating budget, it requires a town meeting. WPCA will call a special meeting on Thursday night to allocate the money before Monday.

Mr. Yamartino summarized that this resolution enables the town to apply for the STEAP grant and the town does not need to put any money into it. They do look more favorably on STEAP grants when the town is willing to put in 20 percent of the cost. They are trying to get the maximum of \$500,000 to do the work on all three pump stations plus an additional 20 grinder pumps. Mr. Yamartino did state that the only pump that the town owns is at Laurel Brook and the others are owned by the WPCA and individuals at the lake. The ARP money will then go to pay for the culvert.

Jim Irish stated that the cost of the lake sewer system was paid back by the residents to the WPCA with assessments and asked who now owns it. Mr. Yamartino felt that the WPCA owns it on behalf of the residents. He hopes that these pump replacements will prevent the need for another assessment.

Mr. Yamartino summarized that this is a good approach and a way to get cash infusion as well as help stabilize the costs of the sewer system, particularly in the lake area without putting a burden on the rest of the town. He also explained that the grant is being written by the Town Engineer and if the grant is awarded, all of the funds need to be spent within one year of the decision. The town should know by September if the grant is awarded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Boards and Commissions Appointments

a. Housing Authority

Mark D'Orvilliers (D) to fill remaining vacant term of Marty Smith, 10/01/18-09/30/23

Bob Yamartino stated that Mark D'Orvilliers is very interested in filling the vacant term. He believes that all of the selectmen know him and he would be a good addition to the Housing Authority. Jim Irish asked if his joining the Housing Authority as a Democrat continues the bipartisan make-up and Carol Bufithis felt that it would be a balanced board.

b. Planning and Zoning Commission

Taryn Ruffino (D) as alternate to fill vacant position, 01/01/20-12/31/22

Mr. Yamartino reviewed that they had two very strong candidates when they originally interviewed people for Planning and Zoning, Taryn Ruffino and Michael Janis. It turns out that Scott Wheeler has not resigned from the Commission, so there is only one vacancy. That commission is very heavy on the Republican side, so it was decided to nominate Taryn Ruffino, who is a Democrat.

Jim Irish made a motion, seconded by Bob Yamartino, to approve Mark D'Orvilliers to fill the remaining vacant term of Marty Smith, 10/01/18-09/30/23 on the Housing Authority and Taryn Ruffino as an alternate to fill a vacation position 01/01/2012/31/22. Motion carried unanimously.

Carol Bufithis offered to reach out to Michael Janis asking if he would be willing to help with the WPCA or the Housing Authority. Bob Yamartino noted that the WPCA member needs to be from the Rockfall area. Ms. Bufithis also mentioned that Megan Wallett is no longer the

chairman of the Democratic Town Committee. She added that Michael Janis may be a good fit for Economic Development and Mr. Irish encouraged her to ask him to do that.

Bob Yamartino added that Robert Monthei's position on the WPCA actually expired, but he is willing to continue to serve. He noted that they are not allowed to revise tonight's agenda as it is a special meeting, so they will include this at the next meeting. He added that the WPCA does not have any alternates and he asked the Charter Revision Commission to look at that.

Bob Yamartino reviewed that he had sent a letter to the two town committees, the selectmen and the chairs of each board that he is looking for volunteers.

Charter Revision Commission - 7:20 PM

a. Update

The Board of Selectmen met last week with the Charter Revision Commission and charged them with their duties. The charge of this commission will be published in the town paper and Bob Yamartino has a draft to review. They have been encouraged to open up the entire charter.

Mr. Yamartino's greatest disappointment is that the method for approval and timing. He had wanted to avoid a municipal election year, but it will be in that time frame. A special election could be held, but it would require 30 percent of registered voters. A general election has no requirements on the number of voters. The Charter Revision Commission hopes to hold a public hearing by the end of the month and Mr. Yamartino will write a press release.

Carol Bufithis noted that Ruth Brizzard would like to be involved and is interested in the Economic Development Commission and seems to be very well-qualified. Bob Yamartino explained that he would like to appoint people to the Economic Development Commission at the next meeting on Tuesday, September 6th.

Selectmen/Selectwoman Report - 7:30 PM

a. Middlefield Cemetery town ownership

Bob Yamartino had no new updates on this issue, but didn't want it to fall off the radar.

b. Herbicide treatment of Beseck Lake

Jim Irish reported that the permit was granted by DEEP today for three years of herbicide treatment in the lake. One of the approvals had a number of conditions, including both pre- and post-surveys of the lake by a qualified biologist and another about fish and mussels. The town applied for the permits in January and the herbicide should have been applied in the first week or

two in July. The NDDB held it up so long that Mr. Yamartino finally had to send a letter. Another area of DEEP actually granted a grant to help fund it.

Jim Irish noted that they are discussing whether they should just wait until next year. The lake manager stated that it would be a good idea to wait. The herbicide treatment company stated that this might still be a good time to do the treatment if there are young plants that are just emerging, but Mr. Irish's personal opinion is that they may just want to get some extra billing. He wasn't sure if the company had biologists that are capable of meeting the criteria. Mr. Irish felt that one of the reasons there are so many conditions is because of disagreement between AER (the lake manager) and DEEP.

The town now needs to decide if they move forward this year and spend the extra money for a survey and do they want to challenge the conditions of the permits. Bob Yamartino felt that they should accept the conditions and he will write a letter to DEEP explaining that the town is willing to have the state hire the specialists as it is a state-owned lake and the town will help out with any supervision that is needed. Because the grant will not cover any surveys, the town would be willing to partner with the state in this process.

c. Other

Bob Yamartino met with the Firehouse Building Committee this past week and they are moving forward with a couple of different designs. They hope to have pricing soon. They have agreed to have an open house by the end of this month or early September on a Saturday and Sunday to allow people to walk through the current facility and look at all of the proposed plans.

Mr. Yamartino also reported that they are close to switching the administrator for the Fire Company Pension so that it meets all requirements. They are also working on a plan to incentivize people to invest in the plan.

Bob Yamartino also noted that website development is underway. He stated that the interactions that will be available are pretty exciting and will allow the town to be more responsive.

Carol Bufithis stated that minutes from the Board of Selectmen meetings need to be done on a more timely basis. She is aware that this has been a problem and wondered if they can hire someone to do them. She has heard complaints about this. Mr. Yamartino explained that Tonya Hogan used to do the minutes as the Assistant Town Clerk, but Donna Golub will not do them. They are now using an outside service to do the minutes until at least the end of November. Jim Irish added that there is a state statute that requires minutes to be posted within seven days.

Carol Bufithis updated the board on the compost program. This past Friday, Sean from DMIAAB came to the garage and used one of the town's trucks to go to Quantum where he was blown away by their operation. She also explained that both DMIAAB and the town have

CIRMA insurance, so coverage is in place. Mr. Yamartino stated that he has heard people saying that the cost of the transportation and everything probably exceeds any savings on tipping fees. He did point out that there are reasons beyond the tipping fees for doing this. Ms. Bufithis stated that composting fees became prohibitive, so they decided to enter into this program. The tipping fee with Quantum is \$83.00/ton vs. \$101/ton with MIRA. She does hope that there can be a compost farm at DMIAAB someday. Over the past nine months, 120 families have donated 20,000 pounds of food scraps. Jim Irish encouraged her to put results from the program on the town website. In September, they will begin working with the Eco and DECA Clubs at the high school and have a very long list for them to work on. Ms. Bufithis then reviewed the process for composting at the transfer station and bringing it to Quantum.

Carol Bufithis noted that there is a Community Common Ground Grant and she will talk to the new director of the Local Wellness Coalition.

Adjournment - 8:18 PM

Carol Bufithis made a motion, seconded by Bob Yamartino, to adjourn the special meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First